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Committees
Economic Development, Small
Business and Regulatory Reform VC
Families and Human Services VC
Government Operations
Health Policy

The Jacobs Report

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, August 22, 2003

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GOVERNORS DISCUSS INTERNET TAX

Governor Granholm attended the National Governors Association (NGA) meeting in Indianapolis this week to discuss, among other issues, the possible implementation of an internet tax. Some governors support a multi-state sales tax collection system to offset losses in revenue as commerce moves to the Internet. A recently released NGA report showed 20 states have agreed to a simplified tax system.

Utah Governor Michael Leavitt and Virginia Governor Mark Warner said 22 large retailers have also agreed to voluntarily collect sales taxes and remit the revenues back to appropriate states where the purchasers live.

The governors said their colleagues support the extension of a moratorium on taxing access to the Internet, but oppose extending the moratorium on taxing bundled services that include access and other services.

The governors said strong opposition exists against Congressional discussion of a proposal that would narrow the definition of a large company's "nexus" which is used to determine if it is subject to a state's taxes.

FINAL LAND USE REPORT PRESENTED

More than 150 proposals to help the state better manage land use, help revitalize urban areas and minimize sprawl were formally presented to Governor Jennifer Granholm and the Legislature Monday as the Land Use Leadership Council delivered its final report.

The 100-page report was a few days late in its final delivery, held up because the nation's largest electrical blackout prevented council members in the Detroit area from receiving their copy of the final document.

Rep. Ruth Johnson (R-Holly), a member of the council, said the report was a good starting point, and hoped with the support of Ms. Granholm and various interest groups the proposed recommendations would become law.

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Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema (R-Wyoming) said the Senate will give serious consideration to all the recommendations in the report. Any comprehensive land use policy has to call for revitalizing the state's urban areas, he said.

The report indicates at each recommendation which commission member had either reservations or objections to the proposal. All recommendations were approved by a majority of the council members.

A recommendation that drew the largest opposition was a proposal calling for supporting efforts to encourage development and use of mass transit. Seven council members, all either legislative Republicans, business leaders, or local government representatives, had objections to the proposal.

HOUSE COMMITTEE SCHEDULES SEX OFFENDER HEARING

Rep. Lauren Hager (R-Port Huron) said this week that the House Committee on Family and Children Services would be meeting in September to discuss Senate Bill 516. Introduced earlier this session by Senator Gilda Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods), SB 516 would amend the Michigan Adoption Code to provide that a child could not be placed with any person convicted of criminal sexual conduct (CSC) in any degree. Currently, an exception is made if the victim of CSC is 18 years of age or older, the slippery rationale being that if a sex offender targets adults, he/she won't target children.

In an Oakland County case, a man who had served 11 years in prison for first-degree CSC was allowed to adopt children when he married and recently was charged with raping one of his adopted daughters repeatedly over a period of several years. Though the Family Independent Agency conducted an extensive investigation prior to the adoption and, along with the judge and the children's lawyer, had concerns about the adoption, the man was allowed to adopt the children because his victim in the earlier rape was over the age of 18.

"The loophole in the law clearly needs to be closed so that such a situation does not happen again," said Senator Jacobs. "SB 516 would help ensure that courts, when making adoption decisions, do not place children in harm's way."

SB 516 passed the Senate unanimously on June 12 and is scheduled for Rep. Hager's committee on September 24 at 2pm (or at the conclusion of House session) in room 307 of the House Office Building.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

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